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THE DATE OF EZEKIEL 38 1—39 20

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ALTHOUGH a few have thought that these chapters were written later than the time of Ezekiel (see especially the article by Professor Schmidt, *Enc. Bib.*, 4332 f.), nevertheless it still remains the usual view that they were written by that prophet. In view of the peculiar character of these chapters, therefore, the questions of authorship and date may well be considered.

It is generally agreed that Persia, mentioned in 38 5, was unknown to Ezekiel. The explanations of this reference as due to textual corruption or as signifying some other country than Persia are not convincing, they are so evidently attempts to evade a difficulty. The mention of Persia in 27 10 is not parallel, for that is generally regarded as a textual error for Cush, on the very good ground of the closely related passage in 30 5.

Ezekiel could hardly have referred to Meshech and Tubal as living states, 38 2, 3; 39 1, when he had spoken of them in 32 26, 27 as having passed away. In the other reference to these countries in Ezekiel 27 13, as traders with Tyre, Ezekiel evidently had in mind the earlier history.

The phrase **בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים**, 38 16, usually translated *in the latter days*, but better *in the end of days*, has, in its occurrences elsewhere, a pseudepigraphical implication. It is always used in passages which are directly or by implication attributed to an author earlier than the real one and are descriptive of the actual conditions of the writer's own time and of earlier events leading up to it, or occasionally of the author's expectation for the

immediate future; they consist for the most part of history in the form of prediction. The obvious reason for this is that the prophets who prophesy in their own names emphasize the predictions as growing out of present conditions and hence as belonging to the near future; a pseudepigraphist, on the other hand, is interested to make the apparent predictions seem to refer to a remote future which is actually his own time. This conclusion concerning the use of the phrase is in accord with the consensus of modern opinion concerning the passages where it occurs. The passages, aside from this one in Ez. 38 16, are the following. Gen. 49 1, "And Jacob called unto him his sons, and said: Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the latter days", forms the introduction to the Blessing of Jacob, written not before the time of David which describes conditions in that time. Num. 24 14, "And now, behold, I go unto my people: come, and I will advertise thee what this people shall do to thy people in the latter days", is an introduction to some of the oracles of Balaam, written not before the time of David, which describe conditions present in the time of the writer. Dt. 4 30, "When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, in the latter days thou shalt return to Jehovah thy God, and hearken unto his voice", is attributed to Moses, and describes repentance after adversity, probably the repentance of the exile, during which it was written. Dt. 31 29, "For I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days; because ye will do that which is evil in the sight of Jehovah, to provoke him to anger through the work of your hands", also attributed to Moses, describes similarly a time of rebellion and disaster, which is that of the writer, probably about the time of the exile. Hos. 3 5, "Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek Jehovah their God, and David their king, and shall come with fear unto Jehovah and to his goodness in the latter days", is descriptive of the time of blessing after the exile and was written in that time, as it is generally agreed. Jer. 23 20, "The anger of Jehovah shall not return, until he have executed, and till he have performed the intents of his heart: in the latter

days ye shall understand it perfectly", practically identical with 30 24, was written later than Jeremiah, and refers to the understanding of God's acts in the later time, which is that of the writer. Jer. 48 47, "Yet will I bring back the captivity of Moab in the latter days, saith Jehovah", is later than Jeremiah, and is an addition to the preceding prediction of disaster to Moab; the improved fortunes of Moab were doubtless present to the writer. Jer. 49 39, "But it shall come to pass in the latter days, that I will bring back the captivity of Elam, saith Jehovah", is similar in every way to the verse concerning Moab just mentioned. Dan. 2 28, in which the phrase is in Aramaic but is a Hebraism, "But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and he hath made known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these", is introductory to the interpretation of the dream, this interpretation purporting to have been given by Daniel but actually written centuries later. The interpretation of the dream gives, in the form of prediction, the history from the time of Daniel to the time of the writer, with further prediction for the immediate future. Dan. 10 14, "Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days; for the vision is yet for many days", purports to be the language of the revealing angel to Daniel, and the message is of the same nature as in the earlier Daniel passage just mentioned. Is. 2 2, substantially identical with Mic. 4 1, "And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills: and all nations shall flow unto it", is directly attributed to Isaiah in the preceding verse. It is generally agreed that this was written after the exile. This probably does not represent actual conditions of the time of the writer but what he expects in the near future. In accordance with this usage which has just been discussed, therefore, this phrase in 38 16 signifies that the writer, while wishing this to be attributed to Ezekiel as a prediction, actually belonged to a later time when the conditions described were either present or expected in the immediate future, apparently for the most part actually present.

The use of the name Gog also indicates a date later than Ezekiel. The popular understanding of this word as the name of a people, the Scythians, is without basis; the writer is very clearly using it as the name of an individual, the prince, that is, king or leader, of various countries or peoples named. In 38 2, 3; 39 1 Gog is called specifically the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal. Whatever the real significance of the name may be, a point which will be discussed later, it is clearly used as the name of the hostile, invading king. But this king is represented as being far in the future at the time of Ezekiel, a fact which appears not only from the phrase *in the end of days* already discussed, but also from the similar unique phrase *in the end of years*, 38 8, and from the other phrase *after many days*, 38 8. Ezekiel could not, in accordance with the general analogy of Old Testament prediction, have given this prediction for the remote future and called the invading king by his name. Of course this might be possible if it was purely a dynastic or official term, like Pharaoh, which is, however, in no way suggested. The phrase *after many days*, it may be noted in passing, is closely analogous to the phrases occurring in Dan. 8 26; 10 14, where the evident purpose is to give the impression that events of the writer's own time had been predicted long before.

Further, the picture of the future presented in these chapters is out of accord with the customary representation in the time of Ezekiel. It comprises a gathering of nations against Judah, an invasion of the land, and a destruction of the invading forces by the direct act of Yahweh himself, without human action. Such a picture of a destruction of hostile forces *in* Palestine by a gigantic catastrophe is unknown to the prophecy of the exile and before the exile. In Ezekiel and the other prophets of about his time and earlier the judgments upon the nations, which are frequent, are represented as coming upon them individually and in their own lands, also in some measure through human instrumentality. Representations like the one here given are found after the exile and are, in fact, apocalyptic, being frequent in the non-canonical apocalyptic books. Conspicuous examples of a similar conception are found in Joel 4 1-3, 9-17 (Eng. 3 1-3, 9-17), probably to be dated not earlier than 400 B. C., and Zech. 14, much later than that.

The general method of presentation in these chapters is also, in some measure, apocalyptic. This appears partly in the use of veiled language, which will be discussed later, and also in the use of exaggeration. The language descriptive of the victory, in particular, is much exaggerated; this applies to the astonishing quantity of the weapons that are used for fuel, 39 9-10; the long time required for burial of the dead bodies, 39 11-15; and the great convulsions of nature, 38 19-23. This quality of extreme exaggeration often appears after the exile, see Is. 60, 65 17-25, 66, all in Trito-Isaiah, Joel 3 3, 4 (Eng. 2 30, 31); Zech. 14 4, and frequently; it becomes of course particularly extreme in the non-canonical apocalyptic books.

The mental attitude toward the earlier prophets in 38 17, also, shows the later, apocalyptic, standpoint. The closest parallel in the Old Testament appears in Dan. 9 2. The writer there was a student of the earlier prophets and obtained from them his message in considerable measure, in a time when the living voice of prophecy was thought to have ceased. The writer in Dan. 9 2 and the following treatment, see especially 9 24, connected his message specifically with that of Jeremiah, to give it the weight of that prophet's authority. The purpose of the writer in Ez. 38 17 is the same, although he does not mention the earlier prophets by name. By general agreement this verse, with a slight textual change, should be translated as a statement, not an interrogation: "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Thou art he of whom I spake in old time by my servants the prophets of Israel, that prophesied in those days for many years that I would bring thee against them".

Further, the phrase used in reference to these earlier predictions, 38 17, בְּיָמִים קְדָמוֹנִים, translated *in old time*, may be better rendered *in ancient times*, having reference to an indefinite but remote period. It is difficult to find predictions at all parallel to this earlier than Jeremiah. Hence it is an inappropriate phrase in the mouth of Ezekiel, implying a much later time of writing.

The use of other particular words and phrases in these chapters is indecisive. There are some very close parallels in language with Ezekiel, but most of the characteristic phrases of

Ezekiel, as given in Driver's Introduction, are wanting in these chapters. Of course the brief extent of these chapters would make many omissions natural; on the other hand, the resemblances can be explained as due to deliberate intent on the part of a later writer. The style and syntax, however, indicate a time later than Ezekiel. The style is awkward, rough, and involved, the syntax is poor; needed words, especially prepositions, are frequently omitted.

The evidence presented indicates that these chapters were written after the exile and probably late in that period. The time of their composition remains to be considered.

The historical situation which furnishes the background is the first matter needing attention. The prominence of exaggeration in these chapters makes it probable that the description of the nations appearing here is somewhat ideal, so that an exact correspondence need hardly be expected. Nevertheless, the conditions here reflected should give a general idea of the time of the writer, with most, at any rate, of that which purports to be prediction being regarded as a description of the actual time of writing. These chapters indicate, then, that they were written when Palestine was suffering an invasion on a large scale, Jerusalem and the temple, which are here ignored, not being the principal objects of attack. The climax of the picture, however, the destruction of the invading hosts, with its abundance of ideal elements, is doubtless not history but prediction, as in the similar case in Dan. 11 45 where the prediction of the death of Antiochus Epiphanes in Palestine serves as the climax of the preceding historical resumé.

No invasion of Palestine that corresponds even in a general way to this description can be found after the exile and before the Maccabean period. The invasions of Palestine during this time were largely incidental, coming as a result of warfare between adjacent nations. The most serious invasions of Palestine during this period probably occurred during the reign of Artaxerxes Ochus, 359—338, see Josephus, *Ant.*, xi, 7, 1, and of Ptolemy Soter, 320; but in these the temple was the particular object of attack.

There remains for consideration the Maccabean period. The

time between 168 and 165 is excluded by the silence of these chapters in Ezekiel concerning the temple. After 161, also, the invasions were less extensive than earlier, probably not sufficiently serious to warrant such a description as appears here.

The invasion between 165 and 161 which corresponds most closely to this description seems to be that of the young king Antiochus Eupator, 162, the king really accompanying Lysias, his commanding general and former guardian, on this expedition. In this campaign the operations were prolonged for a considerable period, Bethsur and Bethzachariah were successively taken by the invaders, and the progress of events was uniformly unfavorable to the Jews until the attack was abandoned by reason of bad news from outside Palestine. The forces of Lysias at this time were extraordinarily large, probably larger than in any other campaign of the Maccabean time, consisting of a hundred thousand infantry, twenty thousand cavalry, and thirty-two elephants. They were gathered from various nations; 1 Macc. 6 28, 29 says: "And when the king heard this, he was angry, and gathered together all his friends, even the rulers of his host, and them that were over the horse. And there came unto him from other kingdoms, and from isles of the sea, bands of hired soldiers". At some time during the progress of this campaign, it seems probable, this message of encouragement was written, it being similar in its general nature and purpose to the messages of encouragement from history written as prediction in the Book of Daniel.

Some further details in the description of these chapters fit particularly well the time of this campaign in 162. The Jews are described as dwelling securely, 38 11, as "gathered out of the nations", 38 12; the land is described as "brought back from the sword", 38 8, and as "gathered out of many peoples", 38 8, the land here evidently meaning the people. As a matter of fact, the Jews in Palestine from 165 to 162 were dwelling in security, the land had apparently been redeemed from the sword of the Syrian power, and the Jews had been gathered in from outlying regions in Galilee and east of the Jordan.

Most of the nations mentioned in these chapters need not be discussed as there is nothing to add to the identifications which

have been suggested by others. The writer of the chapters represents these various nations as included in the invading army. It is probable that some of these nations are to be regarded as the sources of the mercenary soldiers mentioned in the quotation given from 1 Maccabees. It is probable, however, that the writer considered most of them as belonging to the empire of Antiochus. Not all these nations were included in the territory covered by the actual empire of Antiochus Eupator, but all or nearly all had been in the empire of the Seleucidae at some time and hence could be included in an ideal representation, in accordance with the exaggeration characteristic of these chapters. Such a description of the empire uses the veiled language of apocalyptic usage, which was natural at that time.

The name of the king Antiochus Eupator, according to this view, appears here as Gog. The only occurrence elsewhere of the name Gog in the Old Testament, in 1 Chron. 5 4, as the name of a descendant of Reuben, doubtless has no connection with the use of the name here. The name Gog, if given to the king, was used designedly, as a cryptic apocalyptic name.

The only famous Gog known to history was Gyges king of Lydia, the founder of the most prominent dynasty of that country. He was in contact with Ashurbanipal of Assyria at about 661 B. C. The Assyrian form of the name of Gyges is Gugu, the Greek form Γύγης. The Hebrew form גוג is a sufficiently exact Hebrew equivalent of the forms in these languages. More strictly exact, of course, as a Hebrew word would be the form גוג, which may equally well have been the original pointing in mind for the Hebrew word here. If Gog was chosen as a cryptic name for Antiochus, it was doubtless because of the actual or supposed likeness of Antiochus to Gyges. The dynasty of Lydian kings founded by Gyges was noted in antiquity for wealth, luxury, and immorality. The wealth of Gyges in particular was proverbial. The resemblance of Antiochus was close in all these particulars. The Seleucidae in general were, if not wealthy, at least greedy of wealth, they were luxurious and immoral.

But would the writer be acquainted with any one so far afield in time and space as Gyges? The fact is that Gyges was a name

unusually familiar in antiquity. He appeared in popular tales and proverbial expressions among the Greeks and Romans, notably in Plato and Herodotus, and in many other writers of more or less eminence down to the early centuries of the Christian era. The Jews would be acquainted with this as well as other similar matters from Greek sources with which they had long been familiar in the Maccabean time. For a treatment of this matter, see K. B. Smith, *The Tale of Gyges and the King of Lydia*, *Am. Journal of Philology*, xxiii (1902), pp. 261—282, 361—387.

The references to Magog, it should perhaps be noted, while having nothing directly to do with the questions here discussed, are probably not original. These are found only in 38 2 and 39 6. In 38 2 the phrase אֲרֵץ מָגוֹג, perhaps better read אֲרֵץ מָגוֹג, is wanting in the parallel v. 3 and is probably to be omitted. It may be regarded as a scribal gloss explanatory of the name Gog. In 39 6 G reads Gog for Magog, which is to be preferred. The whole of the first part of this verse is better in G, "And I will send a fire upon Gog, and the isles shall dwell in peace".

Ez. 39 21—29 has little connection of thought or expression with these chapters under discussion. V. 21—22 are not particularly inappropriate with the preceding. But v. 23—29 are dealing with the captivity in a way that is inappropriate for the time here indicated and give no allusions to the thought of these chapters just preceding. It is possible, therefore, that v. 21—22 form the conclusion to the preceding; it is perhaps more probable, however, that they go with the following; in that case the whole of v. 21—29 is quite independent of these chapters. Those verses may be connected with ch. 37.